

I'm pleased today to announce the first recipients of the Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award. This new award will be presented annually during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. This year, the Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award honors Platte County Sheriff Richard Anderson and the Platte County Sheriff's Department.

You have some background information about Crystal Kipper and Ali Kemp. We are grateful to have their parents with us this morning, Anna Kipper and Roger Kemp, who will be making some remarks later. By honoring two young crime victims whose deaths profoundly touched us all, we pay our respects to all victims of crime, as well as recognizing those who work diligently to prevent the exploitation of children.

We can't turn back the clock to erase the tragedy suffered by victims of crimes. What we can do – what we are committed to doing – is to pursue justice on their behalf. Unfortunately, even the best effort of law enforcement sometimes isn't enough and victims suffer when crimes go unpunished. But that doesn't mean they are forgotten. This annual award is intended to be a small reminder of both the value of justice and the pain shared by victims of crime.

Each year during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, the Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award will be presented in recognition of an extra step taken to stop those who would harm or exploit children. That is my highest priority, and this award honors those who share that conviction and work diligently on behalf of our most vulnerable citizens – children.

Sheriff Anderson recently announced the formation of the Cyber Crimes Initiative, which will target Internet crimes against children. A priority of this initiative is to investigate and arrest those who attempt to exploit children via the Internet, particularly those who travel to the area to meet them for sex. The Cyber Crimes Initiative also investigates child pornography cases.

Just as the Kipper and Kemp cases highlight the need to protect children from criminals who prowl on our highways and in our neighborhoods, Platte County's Cyber Crimes Initiative reminds us that Internet predators can invade our homes through the open door of the Internet.

I know first-hand the difficulty of investigating and prosecuting these types of cases. Internet predators don't recognize jurisdictions or geographic boundaries, and they take advantage of the relative anonymity of cyberspace. We all recognize the horrendous nature of these crimes, and we all agree that more can and should be done to prevent them. Sheriff Anderson and his department have stepped forward, taking it upon themselves to aggressively attack this growing threat to children.

Sheriff Anderson's Cyber Crimes Initiative is an ambitious undertaking that has already yielded impressive results. Five cases have already been accepted for review for federal prosecution. Fewer children will fall prey to Internet predators as a result of this initiative.

In recognition of the laudable work on behalf of protecting children, I would like to personally thank Sheriff Anderson, and present him and his department with the first annual Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award.